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## EDITORIAL

THE new legislation for the ceremonies of Holy Week to which attention is drawn in 'Extracts' in this issue, and which requires every Catholic to prepare in a new and deeper manner for the coming Easter, reminds us of the essential place the liturgy holds in the Christian life. The Holy See now states clearly the supremacy of liturgical prayer over private devotions, and in preparing for this Paschal ceremonial we should become more aware of the nature of the liturgy and its place in our Christian life.

One of the contributors to the present number of THE LIFE expounds the idea of the Mass as the central liturgical action and the source of spiritual life. But it should be noted that he takes for granted the primary meaning and function of the liturgy in concentrating on the effect it has upon the Christian. He is considering Christian worship as a channel of sanctification, and indeed it is, and a true participation in these new liturgical ceremonies at Easter will bring to the Church as a whole an abundance of grace and holiness. When, however, the beginner approaches the liturgy its supremacy over his own private devotions must be seen in the demand it makes on him to unite with the whole Mystical Body in giving himself entirely to God. Sacrifice is the keynote of liturgical ceremonial, the handing over of oneself to the worship of the Divine Majesty. Having given himself, the Christian moves on inevitably to Communion, to the reception of God's divine gifts. One of the distinctions between liturgy and popular or private devotions lies in this: 'devotions' are mainly concerned with the reception of graces, answers to prayer, the experience of God's love, whereas liturgy is worship and centred in the one act of Sacrifice offered by Christ and his Body on Calvary and on the altar.

The liturgy is the Mass and the extension of the Mass throughout the day and the year. And the Mass is Calvary leading on to the Resurrection and Communion. And while we are enabled to share in the one central act of worship on Calvary every day in the Holy Sacrifice there is one time in the year when the Church uses all her dramatic and artistic powers to reveal this act in its



most realizable form—in the ceremonies of Holy Week. It is the intention of the Holy See in the restoration of the Paschal liturgy to draw all the best in popular devotions back into this sacrificial act—and it should be remembered that most of these devotions have grown up in close contact with the liturgical year. In this way all that is best in the 'devotions' of the people is assured a place in the worship of the entire Church and is established in an act that is first of all one of self-giving, of offering praise and reparation to the Father through the one great redeeming action of the Son. An obvious example of this may be found in the renewal of baptismal promises now made during the Vigil of Easter. Hitherto this has been one of the high-lights of popular missions; but it has been found to be even more powerful and effective when placed in the baptismal ceremonial of the liturgy.

But we are counselled, urged, in fact commanded to learn the nature and meaning of the new rites which are imposed upon the Roman liturgy. It is therefore literally imperative for every Christian who follows the Roman rite to prepare for the coming Easter first of all in the spirit of sacrifice inspired by the generous following of the Lenten practices, but also in acquainting himself with the meaning of the ceremonial which now surrounds the annual commemoration of the sacrifice of our Lord upon Calvary. The instructions from the Holy See also seem to suggest that this preparation will be most effective if we bring to bear our own personal prayer and devotions upon the liturgy in which we are to participate. It is not a question of merely knowing what the priest is going to do on Maundy Thursday or Good Friday, nor yet simply having some inkling of what is meant by what the priest does. It is not a question of mere study and the exercise of the intellect. It is a question of centring our own personal worship and love of God in the greatest days in the year. We must approach Holy Week in a spirit of intellectual awareness, according to our capacities but also in a spirit of sacrifice, the liturgical spirit of self-giving in union with the whole Church. There are now two months remaining for this liturgical preparation.

## THE MASS: SOURCE AND CENTRE OF THE LITURGY

F. A. MCGOWAN

ONCE the central position of the liturgy in the plan of redemption is recognized<sup>1</sup> and when it is distinguished from the protocol of its administration (the rubrics), then it is seen, not as an end in itself, but the *function* of communication for divine life so that we, who come from the Trinity, may live by the Trinity and go to the Trinity. All definitions of liturgy imply its divine source, the Mass.

The Liturgy is the official dispensation of the Mysteries of Christ. It is 'the whole body of official prayers and sacramental actions whereby the communication of men with God is carried on in the Church', 'the life-dispensing, life-preserving and life-restoring activity of *Ecclesia*, the mystical Christ'. It is the official distribution of Christ's life by which through the Church he communicates grace to individuals by means of the four inter-related parts: the sacraments, the sacramentals and ritual prayers, the Divine Office, and the Liturgical Year—all centred about and finding their source in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

There are many aspects of the Mass, to any one of which a lifetime of study could be devoted, but this article will consider it as source and centre of the liturgy. In any study, we begin with the fact that the Mass is the unbloody sacrifice of the Cross. To get the true focus, to see our subject in its true position and its true proportions, it is well to review summarily the steps in the Plan of Supernatural Adoption so as to recognize the relation of the liturgy to the historical life of Christ and, in particular, to Calvary.

- (a) From all eternity, there is one God in three persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, knowing and loving each other.
- (b) To show forth his goodness and to share his happiness, God made out of nothing other beings, each a unique reflection of himself.
- (c) To further share his happiness, God raised angels and men.

<sup>1</sup> See first article of this series, November, 1955.



above their natures to a created participation in the divine nature, that is, to the state of grace.

- d) Some of the angels, and Adam, the head of the human race, refused to accept this supernatural endowment as a gift from God.
- e) In order to repair to his Father for the offence made against divine love, and to restore divine life to mankind, the Son, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, Jesus Christ, became man, was born of the Virgin Mary, and, by his life—especially his Passion, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension—redeemed the human race.

Here a problem arises. Calvary is the source of redemption for all men, yet no individual is to be saved against his free will or without his personal efforts. Calvary must be made accessible to each of us. To quote from Pope Pius XII's Encyclical, *On the Sacred Liturgy*:

This purchase, however, does not immediately have its full effect, since Christ, after redeeming the world at lavish cost of his own blood, still must come into complete possession of the souls of men. Wherefore, that the redemption and salvation of each person and of future generations until the end of time may be effectively accomplished and be acceptable to God, it is necessary that men should individually come into vital contact with the sacrifice of the Cross so that the merits which flow from it should be imparted to them. In a certain sense it can be said that on Calvary Christ built a font of purification and salvation which he filled with the blood he shed; but if men do not bathe in it and there wash away the stains of their iniquities, they can never be purified and saved (Section 77).

Our Lord solved the problem with divine graciousness. He did not delay the glorification of 'the substance of our frail human nature which he had taken to himself' (*Communicantes*, Ascension Day), but chose to continue his life on earth by a different mode, that of the Mystical Body. There was no time-lag; from the opened side of Christ, when his Sacred Heart was pierced, the Church was born (Pius XII, *The Mystical Body*, Section 35).

The God-Man, now in heaven, is the Head of the Mystical Body, the Church, through which he continues until the end of time his life of teaching, directing, and sanctifying individual persons. Of these three offices, obviously, the most important is that

of furnishing means of sanctification. The Liturgy is the official dispensation of the Mysteries of Christ which are actualized sacramentally in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. But it is not sufficient passively to receive Christ's life through the liturgy; we must deliberately and continuously co-operate with actual graces, exercising and developing the supernatural virtues and gifts received at Baptism. The divine power received through the liturgy must be used to keep the Commandments, to practise the temporal and spiritual works of mercy, to observe the duties of our state of life and, by prayer, to develop a sensitive ear to the suggestions of love. Each correspondence with grace gives a new capacity for God and his grace. All this activity is inseparably associated with the offertory, consecration and communion of the Mass. Its end or purpose is our return to the Trinity.

It is necessary to review one more preliminary concept if the Mass is to be understood as the source of the liturgy. There is the basic statement: The Mass makes present the Mysteries of Christ. An analysis of the orders of 'mystery' in religion shows that in the *intellectual order*, a mystery is a divinely revealed truth which we cannot fully *understand* (e.g. the Blessed Trinity); in the order of activity, in the *operational order*,<sup>2</sup> a mystery is a divine fact whose meaning and power can never be exhausted (e.g. the Resurrection). But every act of our Lord's life, not just the astounding miracles, was that of a divine person acting with his two natures. So we apply the term 'mysteries' of Christ to the events of Christ's historical life (or to the Mass where they are re-presented) when it is desired to accentuate the fact that the essence of the words and act of a divine person cannot be limited by time or space but continue to be actualized sacramentally in the Church through the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice.

The Mysteries of Christ are ours. Christ lived them to redeem us. Christ lived them to communicate his divine life to us. Christ associated us with him in his Mysteries. As he performed them he had us in mind—how the graces they earned would be offered to us; how we would accept these graces to co-operate with his will for us to develop into the unique reflection of himself which he has designated each to be; how we would give back love for love by offering now the homage of affection, sympathy, zeal, reparation. Christ made these mysteries accessible to us through the

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Humbert Clérissac, O.P., *The Mystery of the Church*.



liturgy, especially at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass which is the source of the liturgy. This review has brought us into focus so we can see the place of the Mass in the liturgy, in the communication of divine grace restored by Calvary.

I. The Mass is the re-presentation of Calvary, the source of grace of the liturgy. As we know from the Ordinary of the Mass, the whole of Christ, with *all* his Mysteries—Birth, Passion, Death, Resurrection and Ascension—is always present in the Sacrifice of the Mass. It is because the Sacrifice of the Cross was the culmination, climax, summary of all the events of Christ's historical life, that the Sacrifices of the Mass, in re-presenting Calvary, represents all the mysteries of Christ. Christ, now glorious in heaven, is the same person responsible for all the acts of his historical life; the re-presenting in the Mass re-presents the Person of Christ.

In describing the manner of re-presentation, we must be very precise in the choice and accent of words. The Mass sacramentally re-presents or re-enacts Calvary. It does not 'represent' Calvary as a crucifix or the Passion Play does; then the Mass would be a mere symbol for Calvary, not its sacramental actualization. It does not merely represent Calvary *effectively* as the *cause* of our salvation; each of the sacraments does this. Abbot Vonier, in his *Key to the Doctrine of the Eucharist*, translates clearly from the *Summa Theologica*:

The sacrament (i.e., any sacrament, not just the Holy Eucharist) properly called, is the thing ordained to the purpose of signifying our sanctification; in these, *three* phases may be taken into consideration, namely: the *cause* of our sanctification, which is the passion of Christ; the *essence* of our sanctification, which consists in grace and virtue; and then the ultimate *goal* of our sanctification, which is eternal life. Now these three things are signified by the sacraments; therefore a sacrament is a commemorative sign of what has gone before, I mean the passion of Christ; and a demonstrative sign of what is being brought about in us through the passion of Christ, that is grace; and a prognostic, that is a prophetic sign, of the future glory (III, 60:3). Though all the sacraments do these things, the Eucharist alone *actualizes* sacramentally the Mysteries of Christ because it alone contains Christ substantially.

The Mass does not repeat the Sacrifice of the Cross. Unfortunately, many outsiders believe that we hold this and, therefore,

they think that we nullify the sufficiency of the Sacrifice of the Cross which Christ offered to God, once, for all time and eternally. It is a perfect sacrifice, an infinite sacrifice which would never need to be offered again and, as a matter of fact, cannot be repeated because Christ can die physically no more. In the Mass, Calvary is re-enacted or re-presented; if it were repeated, it would be another sacrifice. The liturgy of the Mass is the re-presentation of the original act in an unbloody manner. The words of the New Baltimore Catechism are clear as well as precise.

The Mass is the same sacrifice as the sacrifice of the cross because in the Mass the victim is the same and the principal priest is the same, Jesus Christ.<sup>3</sup> . . . The manner in which the sacrifice is offered is different. On the cross Christ physically shed his blood and was physically slain, while in the Mass there is no physical shedding of blood nor physical death, because Christ can die no more; on the cross Christ gained merit and satisfied for us while in the Mass he applies to us the merits and satisfaction of his death on the cross (Confraternity Edition, Book 2, QQ. 3600-3602, 1949 edition).

The re-enactment does not take from the uniqueness of the Sacrifice of Calvary nor from its infinite value; it makes accessible to our finite grasp the fruits of that sacrifice.

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass makes present all the Mysteries of Christ's life but not all in the same manner as it does the central act of Calvary. The Proper of the Mass, especially by the choice of the gospel, high-lights one or more of all those to be actualized sacramentally at the consecration. One morning it is our Lord foretelling what great things will come about when he is lifted up; another day, he is defending his friends who indiscreetly express their love for him. But the extract of the Scripture, because of its position as part of the Mass, is more powerful than long, protracted meditation on Holy Writ. Virtue goes forth from him. Our Lord is infinitely greater than a 'model of perfection'. He gives us a share in his own divine nature to act on as we respond to some particular event of his life. As Saint Leo said on the Feast of the Epiphany:

Neither must this day be considered as if the virtue of the act

3 Cf. R. Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., *Le Sauveur et Son Amour Pour Nous*, 1933, p. 367ff. 'Cette oblation intérieure, qui est toujours vivante au cœur du Christ, est-elle numériquement la même que celle par laquelle il s'offrit depuis sa venue en ce monde et surtout sur la Croix?'



which then took place has passed away and nothing has come down to us except the report which faith accepts and memory celebrates: rather, in the mercy of God, *we in our time daily experience the very same realities as were originally accomplished.*

But it has often been asked: If the Sacrifice of the Cross was infinitely perfect, why re-enact it by the Mass? The answer is twofold: we have the divine command to do so, and; the *application* of Calvary's merits to us, because of our finite nature, will not be completed until the end of time—the Mass makes Calvary's fruits accessible to us and, at the same time, provides us with a worship form which is absolutely acceptable to God.

2. The second reason why the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is the source and centre of the liturgy is that the Mass is our sacrifice-oblation: through it we offer the sacrifice supremely pleasing to God. The liturgy is a two-way communication—it brings the Christ-life down to us, and it carries Godward our efforts towards union. All such efforts, hidden or public, are pleasing to God as tokens of our love, but all peoples have recognized the necessity of public expression through corporate sacrifice. There are sacrifices and sacrifices. A few years ago, there was an account of an earnest young priest in England who had given his teen-agers such an understanding of the Mass that it had changed a neighbourhood of hoodlums and delinquents into something like Junior Catholic Actionists. Yet this priest was thrown into a minor panic when it was announced that the diocesan inspector was coming to quiz the youngsters on the different kinds of sacrifice, Old Testament and New, divisions and subdivisions according to the seminary manual of theology. The incident aroused a side-line discussion on how to formulate a leading question that would really tap the student's grasp of the Mass's significance. This one was chosen: Why is the Offertory of the Mass so important for us? To answer that question, 'Why important for us?', one must know the *essence* of sacrifice, even if he mistakes Yom Kippur for the Paschal moon. To answer that question, one must know that deliberate self-surrender, in union with Christ's offering of himself, is required. It has been said:

There is no other act which makes so great a demand upon a person, upon all his energies of soul and body, as participation in the Sacrifice of the Mass.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Sister Jane Marie, O.P., *Living in Christ*. Ann Arbor, 1943, p. 33.

To answer that question, one must feel the inner harmony of the liturgy which explains the first sequence of offertory prayers before the Consecration and a second sequence, again of offertory prayers, after the Consecration, with the True Victim.

We are all familiar with the definition of sacrifice as an external act of public, social worship which a duly appointed priest offers in an approved formula to God alone, for the purpose of glorifying him and attaining union with him, some material object perceptible to the sense and representing the donor's entire being (therefore, usually food, the first necessity of life), and then, by some real or equivalent destruction of the object, expresses: (a) acknowledgment of God's complete dominion over us (adoration); (b) gratitude for past favours (thanksgiving); (c) petition for future benefits; and (d), reparation or atonement for past offences.

At the Offertory we present bread and wine which symbolize Christ and us, his members. To the external offering as a member of the Mystical Body, I must unite myself *with Christ* in the inner and most important sacrifice of striving to make my dispositions like those of the Sacred Heart on the Cross, surrendering my will to God as Christ did, by using his power—actively, by willing to do what he wants; passively, by accepting what he sends. Suppose that I *feel* this beyond my degree of generosity; still, it is not insincere to *will* these dispositions and beg our Lord to give them to me.

So the priest in the name of our Lord in our name takes bread and wine, which symbolize our Lord and ourselves, and offers them solemnly with prayers that express the four ends of sacrifice, begging that we may be partakers of his divinity who deigned to become a sharer in our humanity. We have done all that we can do, yet God is not obliged to accept this sacrifice. But there is a priest whom God cannot ignore and a victim whom he cannot reject, his own Son. And we have a claim on that Son, the claim of a common human nature. The bread and wine which represent Christ *and us* become the Body and Blood of Christ. Our offering of ourselves is accepted because it is united to that of him who is, in himself, perfect adoration, perfect thanksgiving, petition and atonement.

After the consecration, the liturgy curves back, but on a higher level, through a series of prayers by which our Lord, the Priest-



Victim, offers himself for us in solemn sacrifice *to God*. Then he turns and offers himself *to us* in Holy Communion.

Before going on to the Mass as Sacrifice-banquet, the meaning of the Offertory could be summarized. Where the Offertory Procession has been revived, as in the Blessed Sacrament Parish, New York City, since about 1930, for the principal Sunday Mass, all participants have found a new meaning in their daily life as well as greater recollection at Mass. In some schools, several times a year, the procession takes place, in a modified form. Naturally, it cannot be carried out as in the time of Pope Gregory the Great. Then, each brought a portion of bread and a small flask of wine and those who could brought additional gifts—clothing, jewels, foodstuffs, oil—anything that could be used for, or sold for, the upkeep of the church, the support of the clergy and the help of the poor. As the worshippers came up and laid the offering which represented themselves on the altar which represented Christ, the full psalm was sung, each verse alternating with the special versicle which served as a chorus and directed the thoughts in a spirit of self-offering. The Offertory chant that we have now is only the chorus versicle, though more and more choirs are reviving the original form.<sup>5</sup>

So, summarizing the importance of the Offertory, Doctor Pius Parsch draws our attention to six points which are condensed:

- (a) The gift represents the person of each individual giver.
- (b) The Offertory gifts of bread and wine are symbolic; that is, in their very nature they stand for something. Bread represents labour. Wine, the product of the press, stands for suffering and endurance. We bring the offering of our life.
- (c) The Offertory procession brings out the social or community spirit. All together the individual personal gifts make one united offering.
- (d) The bread and wine brought to the altar are to be transubstantiated into Christ; they represent us who are to be transfigured into Christ.
- (e) *The meaning expressed in the Offertory is the meaning of the entire Mass*, that is, the offering of self.
- (f) It is not simply self-offering, but self-offering in union with the self-offering of our Lord. In the ancient Offertory procession the faithful brought each one his personal gifts, and it was laid

On the complicated history of the offertory procession Fr Jungman's *Missarum Solemnia* may be consulted. (French translation II, 271-298.)

upon the altar which represents Christ. Thus, as it were, they mounted the cross with him. This is the deepest meaning of the Offertory; Christ's sacrifice is our sacrifice, and ours is his.<sup>6</sup>

3. Another aspect of the Mass as source and centre of the liturgy is seen when we consider the Mass as our sacrificial banquet through which God gives nourishment to the soul. At the Last Supper, our Lord fulfilled his promises to give his Body and Blood as food and drink, personally serving the apostles and, at the same time, establishing the liturgy by which every man could come to him. Among most peoples, there was at least one rite in which the victim offered to the deity was returned entire or in part to the donors that they might consider themselves guests at table or members of the household; partaking of food which was now identified with the deity, they might share his nature. Our Lord made it clear that it was his intention to give himself really, not figuratively.

The liturgy is the communication of divine life and the sacrificial banquet is the surest and the most divinely intimate means of nourishing that life. Saint Thomas says that we keep our ideas on Communion correct if we consider it as food with its five functions. Food sustains life, enables the organism to develop properly, builds up resistance to disease, cures many ailments, and gives pleasure. Significantly, our Lord told Jairus and his wife to give the child food.

4. The Mass is the centre towards which all the sacraments are administered. From the quotation of Saint Thomas, it was seen that each sacrament commemorates the Passion of our Lord and finds the source of its grace in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Towards the offering of that sacrifice all the sacraments are administered. Baptism gives us supernatural life, makes us children of God and sharers in the *priesthood* of Christ. As soon as we reach the age of reason, we must actively exercise this function of offering the sacrifice. Theologians, considering our Lord's dictum, 'Except ye eat of the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, ye shall not have life in you', teach that Baptism implies 'Communion of desire' which fulfils the obligation for those prevented from ever receiving the Holy Eucharist.

Confirmation, maturing us spiritually, gives us a greater share in our Lord's priesthood, gives us the strength to live and to die,

6 Pius Parsch, *The Liturgy of the Mass*. St Louis, 1937, pp. 57-58.



violently perhaps, united to our Lord's sharing of himself on the Cross and in the Mass. Penance is the individual application of the fruits of Calvary and, if there has been mortal sin, this sacrament is necessary before one can participate in the sacrificial banquet. Extreme Unction helps the soul in its last struggle by supplying our Lord's power won on Calvary to the co-operation which the body finds difficult to give. Holy Orders, by its very title, proclaims that the primary purpose of ordination is the Mass. Its administration, even for the lower orders, is within the Mass structure. Matrimony is also in line. In the February 1953 issue of *THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT*, there was a beautiful article on the Nuptial Mass as integrally, though not essentially, linked with the marriage ceremony where the bride and groom unite the sacrifice they are making to each other for mutual love with the Sacrifice of Christ united with his Spouse.

In the concrete, if we remind ourselves of the relation of the Requiem Mass to Extreme Unction, recall the Reconciliation of Penitents on Maundy Thursday, the administration of Baptism and Confirmation in the services of the Easter and Pentecost Vigils, we see how the Holy Sacrifice is associated with these sacraments.

5. The Mass is also the action towards which the Divine Office is directed. The study of the Liturgical Year shows the Divine Office as extension of the Proper of the Mass which furnishes the prayer setting for the Holy Sacrifice. Beginning at Vespers the evening before the feast, and continuing at calculated intervals until Sext, the Office uses much of the proper of the Mass to point up the Psalms, to seed the mind with phrases that evoke memories and that prepare our dispositions for full participation in the Mass. None shows that these thoughts have matured in the context of the Mass. Second Vespers, repeating some antiphons of the day before and adding new ones for the coming feast, effects continuity in the setting of the Sacrifice which never ceases to be celebrated somewhere on the globe.

6. The Mass uses many sacramentals in its celebration; the others are used in our daily life as we live out the Mass. Some sacramentals are practically incorporated into the proper of the Mass—the candles at Christmas, the ashes on Ash Wednesday, palms on Palm Sunday, the Paschal candle at Eastertide, and so on. Others are outside the Mass but associated with it, such as the blessing of throats with St Blaise's candle, and the Christmas crib. Some

sacramentals are used in the ordinary of the Mass such as the altar stone, crucifix, vessels, linens, vestments, candles, book, cards, bread, wine, incense, words, gestures.

7. The Mass actualizes the Mysteries celebrated during the Liturgical Year; but that topic requires special development.

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## FASTING

ST AELRED OF RIEVAULX<sup>1</sup>

**I**N the Gospel the Lord commends three practices: fasting, prayer, and almsgiving. Fasting restores man to himself; almsgiving restores him to his neighbour; prayer restores him to God. Nothing so takes man away from himself as impurity; nothing so alienates man from man as cruelty, and nothing so separates man from God as ingratitude. Fasting prepares the way for temperance which overcomes impurity. Almsgiving enkindles mercy which crushes cruelty. Prayer brings devotion and fervour which foster gratitude. This is the armour of God whereby we withstand the attacks of the devil. Fortified by these weapons, Moses turned the wrath of God from the people, put Amalech to flight and merited to receive the divine revelation. With this armour, David escaped the plots of Absalom. Elias, using the same weapons, freed himself from the hands of Jezabel. Ezechias laid low the army of Sennacherib by fasting and prayer more than by lances and spears. The Lord consecrated the very beginning of his public life with fasting and prayer. In the old law and dispensation definite times and certain days were appointed for fasting. The prophet Zacharias commended a fourfold fast when he said: 'Fasts you kept ever when three months of the year, or four, six months or nine, were gone, shall be all rejoicing and gladness for the men of Juda now, all high festival.' Since fasting is an affliction of the flesh, how do rejoicing and gladness fit in with it? At festivities men indulge in feasting and have joy, but in fasting they are serious and sad. Let us see how the Lord commends fasting. 'But do thou', he says, 'at thy times of fasting, anoint thy head and wash thy face.' These indeed are not the signs of sadness but of joy. They are marks more of festivity than of affliction.

There are many kinds of fasting and many reasons for fasting. There is fasting of necessity, of devotion, of piety, and of charity. Fasting of necessity is practised because of want, for the sake of penance, and as a measure of precaution. Those who fast out of

<sup>1</sup> Translated by Sister Rose de Lima of Seton Hill College, Pennsylvania, from C. H. Talbot's *Sermones Inediti B. Aelredi Abbatis Rievallensis*, pp. 57-62.

want, not choosing to do so, merit nothing. When a man has sinned and accepts the afflictions of the flesh by voluntary choice he performs the fast of penance. One fasts out of precaution to subdue the flesh that the incitement of food may not be an incentive to sin. In the fast of necessity from want, where all consolation is lacking, there is no joy, exultation, or festivity. In the fast of penance, there is grief at the recollection of sin. In the fast as a means of precaution, there is anxiety which comes from the fear of sinning.

Fasting of devotion may be done to discharge a vow or to win divine grace. Fasting of piety is practised for others. If anyone has subdued his vices by contrition of heart and continuous prayer he begins to mount to the heights of virtue. Then it seems that he no longer needs to fast, according to the Scripture which says: 'Can you expect the men of the bridegroom's company to go fasting, while the bridegroom is still with them?' It is no longer a necessity but piety that persuades a man to fast. For the weak need fasting and he should be an example to them. Perhaps this is the spiritual almsgiving which is common to all Christians. For just as what is superfluous should be given to those in want, so whoever abounds in spiritual wealth should give to those with less. The fourth kind of fasting is the fast of charity. Those living in solitude have no need to fast since they are accustomed to heavenly visitations and refreshed with the sweetness of divine consolations. They loathe earthly food and scarcely consent to take a sufficient amount to sustain their bodies for fear they might derive some pleasure from it. Their love of God pours such affection into their hearts that it allows them no delight in temporal things.

There is therefore corporal fasting and spiritual fasting. But it seems to me that affliction accompanies the former, exultation the latter. The holy prophet Zacharias, commending spiritual fasting, says: 'Fasts you kept ever, when three months of the year, or four, six months or nine were gone, shall be all rejoicing and gladness for the men of Juda now, all high festival.' Spiritual fasting is efficacious without corporal but corporal never without spiritual. The Lord says: 'With such fasting, with a day's penance, should I be content? Is it enough that a man should bow down to earth, make his bed on sackcloth and ashes?' All these things pertain to corporal fasting which the Lord does not accept, as his next statement proves: 'Think you that by such a fasting day, to win the



Lord's favour? Nay, fast of mine is something other.' The false claim learn to forgo, ease the insupportable burden, set free the over-driven; away with every yoke that galls! He shows here what kind of fasting he accepts. Fasting is not only abstinence from food, but much more than that it is the refraining from sin. Therefore the false claim learn to forgo. Whoever sins, sins against himself, his neighbour, or God. Sin is a dishonour to himself, an evil deed against his neighbour, an impiety towards God. Keep clear then of debauchery, says the apostle. Any other sin a man commits leaves the body untouched, but the fornicator commits a crime against his own body. He sins therefore against himself who brings violence upon his own body, subjecting his members to ignominious passions. He sins against his neighbour by false testimonies and the like. He sins against God especially by heresies and blasphemies, which proceed from pride. This pride is the false claim of godlessness, symbolized by the woman whom Zacharias saw sitting in the barrel. The cover of lead was fastened down and the barrel was carried to the land of Senaar, which is interpreted stench, signifying the uncleanness of the proud. Godlessness makes many false claims upon us, enchaining our wretched souls and polluting them with the sordid food of vice. Pride blinds the eyes of our hearts, depriving them of the light of truth and feeding them on empty errors. Some are so inflated with pride that they ignore God's justice and, independent of God, glory in their own. They are the ones who consider themselves great although actually they are least, wise although they are stupid, good although evil. They appear glorious in their own eyes while they are a laughing stock and an abomination to others. Unhappy souls, so fettered that they delight in the darkness of their own errors.

Envy, the worst offspring of its parent pride, is another vice which makes its false claims upon us. It ignores, dissimulates, perverts, or despises all that it sees praiseworthy in another. When it detracts the good or ruins the reputation of others, lessening the esteem in which they are held, it feeds on its own suspicions and thinks it is feasting on the finest foods. Fasting as a check to such licence is very pleasing to God. Another false claim of wickedness is independence whereby man thinks himself sufficient unto himself. This vice makes him rebellious to the counsel of another and disobedient to his own decisions. There are many who know through experience how serious it is to be enmeshed in the nets of their

own will, how difficult, well-nigh impossible, it is to free themselves from it. For whoever becomes the slave of his own will considers easy whatever it dictates, intolerable whatever does not proceed from it. Self-will makes fasting easy, and the burdens of the day light. It endures laborious days and sleepless nights. It changes just as easily to the opposite, practising at first what is useful and then what is useless. He feeds his own soul with vain joy, not depending at all on what others think. Shun this pest, for there is none more hidden, none more pernicious.

There are certain others who do not seek but even condemn the praises of men. Nevertheless, because they please themselves, they ruin everything they do. They hold all in contempt and so rejoice in themselves that they despise the reputation of others, whether good or bad, and rest in the false glory of their own conscience. Let us hear now what fasting the Lord commends: Learn to forgo the false claim, for whoever will be bound by these false claims cannot practise salutary fasting. Granted he afflicts his soul by days with corporal fasting, nevertheless, he feasts interiorly on the food of his own unclean thoughts. Ease, he says, the insupportable burdens. Often the many burdens that we ourselves, not others, have placed weigh us down. To ease and disperse these is to offer a fast most pleasing to God. For although the soul seems to be refreshed happily enough with burdens of this kind, still this reflection hard-presses when it is accompanied by desolation. So the soul goes forth in pursuit of corporal things and brings back with it sense images which it stores in the memory. These images feed the soul with various thoughts which soon burden it with innumerable delights and temptations. The prophet says well that these burdens should be eased by confession and by the consideration of divine judgment. Set free the over-driven. For today, today's troubles are enough. There are many who hold their senses, thoughts, and affections in slavery, subjecting their whole soul to the body, paying all their attention to it, getting neither joy nor sorrow from anything else. The mind accustomed to these things is over-driven under this yoke, now by anger, now by wrath, now by empty joy, now by useless sadness. Set free the over-driven, you who fast, that your thoughts may be able to fly freely to the heights of virtue. Away with the yoke that galls. The burdens that weigh upon the soul are due to habit, corruption, mortality, unhappiness, concupiscence, and attacks of the demons.

He does away with the yoke that galls who conquers bad habits, does not yield to corruption, overcomes mortality, bears misery with equanimity, resists concupiscence, and does not consent to the evil suggestions of the demons. These are the fasts acceptable to God, which the prophet Zacharias commends: 'Fasts you kept ever, when three months of the year, or four, six months or nine were gone, shall be all rejoicing and gladness for the men of Juda now, all high festival.' The number four pertains to the world, which is composed of four elements and is terminated by four directions, signifies the bodily senses, which their Creator's wisdom proportioned to five parts of the body. Seven prescribes quiet, the rest God took on the seventh day after the creation of the world. Ten shows the decalogue of the law where God promises to the labourer the denarius of eternity.

Love of the world begets pride and allures to carnal delights. Solitude imposes restlessness of body and the yoke of bad habits and concupiscence impedes the perfection of the divine commands. Whoever by contempt of the world does not vaunt himself nor envy others nor feed on their praises, nor glory in himself, celebrates profitably the fast of four days. Whoever shuts his ears to murderous counsels, closes his eyes to harmful sights, and with Daniel abstains from feasting and wine, assuredly offers the sacrifice of the five-day fast. And whoever puts aside the care of the body and is not solicitous for today or tomorrow, who abstains from all dissensions and happily keeps a spiritual sabbath within himself, celebrates most joyously the seven-day fast. Then if the galling burdens which we have just mentioned are eased through God's grace working in the mind and heart, he will complete the ten-day spiritual fast as he bends his will to the divine commands. An acute awareness of great virtues infuses joy into these fasts but not without almsgiving too. Whence the prophet immediately adds: Share thy bread with the hungry, give the poor and the vagrant welcome to thy house; meet thou the naked, clothe him; from thy own flesh and blood turn not away. Yet if this precept is understood only according to the letter, it does not include everyone. But if you interpret bread as the opportune word or example, that is as counsel, and home as the affection of the heart, you will easily see how this almsgiving pertains to all. Therefore if to the brother who hungers and thirsts for holiness you show the word of edification and the example of a good life, you are giving bread



to the hungry. If you who are rich in virtues recognize another who is wanting in them, if you do not spurn your own flesh in him, which is a reminder to you of your former weakness, but draw him to your heart with arms of compassion, you have opened the door of your house to the needy. Approach, counsel, console, soothe him whom you see exposed to temptations and you have covered the naked. A man purged by such fasting, recreated by such almsgiving, enters the inner room of his own heart, closes the door of all his corporal senses, and pours out his soul, and then crosses over into the place of the tabernacle, leading the way to God's house amid cries of joy and thanksgiving, and all the noise of holiday. For the great festival is celebrated not only with men but with angels, not with the sound of the mouth but with jubilee of soul, not with carnal delights but with spiritual feasts. Therefore, by fasting we macerate the body so that through the fruit of good works we may be refreshed in soul. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



## DETACHMENT

By E.B.

**I**N that most helpful little book by Fr Bede Jarrett, *No Abiding City* he gives us the key to what is meant by 'Detachment'. We are pilgrims in this world, travellers; 'here we have no abiding city', and so we must 'travel light', as the saying goes. There is a great temptation in the modern world to accumulate more and more things—they all seem necessary somehow, and the advertisements in any paper or periodical that we open try to persuade us that we *must* have this or that—and so perhaps we get it and then persuade ourselves that we cannot possibly do without it.

Or if we are not attached to 'things', we may become attached to sitting in a special chair, a special way of doing things, a special seat in church. We can become attached to our comforts and our food. In religious life, we can become attached to some devotion,

some particular way of singing the Mass, or to some 'feelings' we experience when taking Holy Communion or saying some prayer, and then one day the feelings are taken away and we realize that it was the 'feelings' to which we were attached and which were so important, and not Holy Communion or prayer.

Or we may become attached to some idea—we cannot give it up, and it means so much. Anyone who does not agree with that idea is wrong, or deliberately obstructive, and so on. Attachment to the idea means more than the idea itself—more than what it stands for. For instance, we might become so attached to the idea of Temperance or Anti-Vivisection, that were they to come about universally, we should be at a loss until we had found some other idea to become attached to!

It is perhaps necessary to state here that there is no reason why we should not have some possessions, or prefer one seat to another in church, but we must not become inordinately fond of them, must not make them *extensions of ourselves*, because if we do that then our heart is centred in them and not in God. A very succinct description of detachment appears in the *Catholic Encyclopaedic Dictionary* which is worth quoting in full: 'True detachment consists not in a negation of affection for creatures (all of which have their part in God) but rather in an enlightened and just sense of proportion; it is exercised in respect of material success, wealth and good fortune, not because these things are not good in their kind and degree but on account of their difference in kind and relative unimportance in the destiny of the human being as a whole. But detachment of will is the hardest, most necessary, and most meritorious detachment: the fully detached person leaves *himself* unreservedly in God's hands, "not as I wilt but as Thou wilt": he asks nothing and refuses nothing.'

The core of the matter seems to be, then, a sense of proportion, a realization of the 'relative unimportance in the destiny of the human being as a whole' of the whole gamut of things to which we can become attached, and the supreme *importance* of being wholly attached to God and to his will.

For ordinary people, and most of us are that, this is not easy. It involves, first of all, an act of the will, a conscious and deliberate 'letting go'. We can start in a small way by giving up some favourite habit, or forgoing some pleasure. But it is very important to know *why* we do it. It must not be for any negative

reason, but in order to 'travel light', to centre our hearts and minds and wills on God and not be side-tracked by all these attachments which tend to hold us back from that. Christian poverty has the same end in view—how hard it was for the rich young man in the gospel, he was too attached to his wealth to 'sell all and come and follow me'. Christ knew, only too well, how the possession of worldly goods tended to hold men back from following him. Over and over again in the Gospels he drives home this point.

Undue attachment to people—our friends, our children, our counsellors—can be the source of so much suffering. It must be stressed again that detachment in this theological sense, does not mean not *caring* for people, not loving them, but our caring and our loving must be disinterested and quite detached from self. Who has not heard of the possessive mother, who cannot 'let go' her children, who still thinks of them as 'hers' and not people in their own right? If only she could detach *herself* from *them* she would find that they are 'hers' in a very much more real sense. And the same is true of friends.

In this connection it is helpful to think of our Lady and the wonderful—perhaps supreme—example we have in her of this detachment. From the very first, when she knew she was to bear God's son, she had to be completely detached from herself and even her own body. She was to be his chosen vessel, she was to have the supreme grace of bearing, within her womb, God's child. I think all women, when they are carrying a child within them, must share to some extent Mary's detachment. They do, in a lesser degree, have this wonderful sense of being used by God for a purpose far greater than the mere fulfilment of their own desire to have a child. But this feeling becomes obscured and is eventually lost. Mary could never forget it—her son was in trust, as it were. She had all the great love that a mother has for her first-born, as keen as, if not keener than, any mother throughout the ages; yet she was called upon to see him suffer in a way no other mother has ever been called upon to do. Her supreme detachment of *self* from her love of him was shown in her willingness to share, right up to the very end, in all his sufferings. If her presence could give him comfort, then she would be there, whatever it cost her. If she had thought of herself at all, then she would have said, as any woman quite understandably might have done, 'I cannot bear to see him suffer so, I will stay away.'



Thus we come back to where we started: we are pilgrims in this world, 'here we have no abiding city'. This knowledge should give us freedom—that freedom of heart and mind and will to be centred in God, freedom to fix our gaze on things eternal and thus come home in the end and possess all things in him, our Abiding City.



## A SHORT CONFERENCE ON THE OCCASION OF A NUN'S FIRST PROFESSION

ADRIAN DOWLING, O.P.

*Arise, my love, my beautiful one, and come; my dove in the clefts of the rock.*

CANT. 2, 13.

**G**OD gives us a very beautiful image here, the image of the dove invited to fly to him, its white wings straining, soaring upwards. We are to fly to Christ. 'Draw me'—make me fly to thee. But the dove shelters in the clefts of the rock. We are clogged down, seeking refuge in the good things of God. Things outside us: outward possessions and attachments, ties holding us earthbound; things inside us, other loves than God, our own selves, our own will.

Today you engage yourself to Christ. This service is for a bride of Christ. It is your aim ultimately to be wed to Christ, to know no other love. But today is, as it were, the day of your engagement. We come to witness that and to pray that you may be faithful. The vows you are about to make are not negative things. They are not inspired by a hatred of God's gifts, but by a desire to go beyond them to the giver. That is not an easy road to take. On the contrary, it is an impossible road without God's mercy, and you have just admitted that. You have told us you seek God's mercy. That must be your aim all the days of your life. If we would presume to leave the clefts of the rock it is to God we must fly, we must find shelter under the wings of his mercy. (Ps. 90, 4.) Christ your Spouse is the Suffering Servant: you must think of that each day you put on your black veil.

In your obedience remember that he first obeyed, for love of you. 'Christ was made for us obedient unto death, even to the death of the Cross.' (Phil. 2, 8.) He knows your weakness, he knows all the difficulties that lie ahead, he who was 'tempted in all things like as we are, without sin'.

So it is with a holy daring and joyful trust that you can accept and face the obligations and austerities of the life to which you are about to bind yourself. You are not dismayed by the very real and solemn promises you are making, even though you are weak and they involve burdens and troubles, because you have first turned to the source of all strength, to him who is 'longsuffering and rich in mercy'.

Our Blessed Lady and our Father St Dominic and all the Saints rejoice with us today that you should have heeded God's call. They stand around us, living witnesses to the reality and the fruits of the trust you show. Like you, they heard and obeyed the voice of God. We know that they join us in our prayer that you may ever more devotedly and generously live as you have promised.



## THE PRIEST AND THE MENTALLY SICK

ALBERT PLÉ, O.P.<sup>1</sup>

**T**O the eyes of faith all sickness is a trial. God is there, offering us a special grace of purification and of sharing in his redeeming death, but a grace hidden and hard to discern and live. Yet the trial is still more formidable for the man whose sickness is mental, especially when, as is the case with neuroses, the sickness only partly destroys his balance and control. His agony at feeling himself partly 'alienated', a stranger, that is, to himself, is intense. Something deep inside him is escaping his inner attention and worse still his power. And on top of that those about him most often, even when they are full of good intentions, understand nothing at all, heap one ineptitude on another and

<sup>1</sup> Translated by Marion Parker.

when they have not provoked it) aggravate the disease. The sufferer feels himself excruciatingly alone, not understood, essentially helpless. Very often his faith seems to him unsettled, without strength or efficacy; all is clouded over with pain and despair.

He has one remaining hope, his confessor. But what can the priest do? He is not a doctor or a psychotherapist, and he cannot be too strongly advised to stay within the limits of his vocation and his powers. Amateurism in this sphere is criminal. It is a good thing certainly that some priests should specialize in these matters, but that presupposes years of training sanctioned by the authority of a degree in psychoanalysis or psychiatric medicine. Such specialists moreover can be only rare exceptions, and they cannot obviate the elementary and universal truth that the priest as such is not a psychiatrist, and that to mix these two functions would be a double mistake—a pastoral mistake and a psychiatric mistake.

That does not mean to say, however, that the priest has no object or efficacy as far as the mentally sick are concerned. He can do a great deal, either before his penitent has become aware of his illness or in the course of its treatment.

He can, especially if he has some psychological sense enlightened by solid knowledge, bring decisive assistance to his penitent in helping him in the first place to understand himself and manage himself better. The more sincere a penitent is, the more he risks being subjective, that is to say showing himself to his confessor not as he is but as he appears to himself to be. It is for the confessor, and still more for the spiritual director, to help him to detect his own illusions, to discover the real motives for his actions, the objective truth about the situation in which he is floundering, and God's will in it for him. In short, what the penitent expects of the priest is what Catholic tradition calls the discernment of spirits. That is true in every case, but more especially in the case of the mentally sick who have still not recognized themselves to be so.

It is then the business of the priest to make an initial diagnosis, or rather to divine that the moral or religious problem which is tormenting his penitent has also a psychological side, and that the part this side plays by way of upset or inhibition is too important for prayer, the sacraments, voluntary efforts, grace even, to be, without a miracle, sufficient remedies. It is the priest's part to bring this truth gently to his penitent's notice. He must proceed



with great sensitiveness and patience, so that his penitent accepts the hypothesis of a neurosis without rebelling against or being shocked by the idea, or, on the other hand, finding in it too useful an excuse for some moral disorder. The amount of responsibility which a neurotic has is always very difficult to define precisely. This much remains, that even if some form of morally bad behaviour seems, after numerous efforts, to be totally beyond the penitent's control, he, the penitent, can at the very least enlist the responsibility which he still has in leaving no stone unturned to get himself out of it. He can, and indeed he must, while at the same time going on with his efforts and his prayers, have recourse to a specialist who will, perhaps, help him to free himself from a pattern of action at once regrettable and beyond his power to control.

If the confessor has been fortunate enough to lead his penitent to accept the possibility of a neurosis, he must then find the psychiatrist competent to deal with it. But even in a large city that is not easy. Psychiatry, in fact, is divided into numerous special branches, from neurosurgery to hormonotherapy, from various sorts of psychotherapy to various sorts of psychoanalysis. How is one to know what treatment the case in question calls for? If, lacking enough knowledge, the confessor is unable to make this initial selection he can usefully send his penitent to a more competent confrère, even too, to an ordinary doctor who has an open mind in these matters and can give enlightened advice. It is greatly to be hoped, especially if there is a question of psychotherapy, that he will be able to approach a Catholic doctor. But one can be a good Catholic and a poor doctor. At least he must make certain that the psychotherapist, if he is not a Catholic, has yet a respect for the true values of faith and morals.

When this problem has been solved and the penitent has consulted the right specialist the confessor's duty is not over. He ought to make contact with the psychiatrist. It is a good thing, in fact, that the confessor should know the professional diagnosis and the nature of the treatment undertaken, and should collect as much information as possible about the psychology of his penitent and the stages of his treatment. The ideal indeed is that the priest and the psychiatrist, each working on his own plane, should make their efforts converge, and that one should not undo what the other does. This collaboration is often difficult, not only because of the secrecy which binds, each on his own side and in a different

way, both the priest and the psychiatrist, but also because of divergences in point of view and sometimes mutual ignorance of the disciplines involved. The confessor must leave no stone unturned to surmount these difficulties.

The advice which he has to give his penitent and his attitude towards him are to be weighed carefully. Each 'case' is unique, and it seems dangerous to give any precise rules lest they should be indiscriminately applied. But one may perhaps risk giving two general directives which are useful in most cases.

Although a distinction can quite legitimately be made between holiness and psychological health, it is impossible not to be aware that the principles which govern these are in many ways correlated and analogous. For instance, humility and charity, the two great virtues of the Gospel, have a well-established healing and preventive action in relation to mental sickness. In encouraging his penitent to practise them the confessor can be sure, not only that he is insisting on the essential thing from a theological point of view, but that he is besides collaborating usefully with the psychotherapist.

The neurotic's cure is indeed at hand when he becomes capable of recognizing without a destructive agony the wretchedness which is in him, when he becomes capable of accepting himself not only with his own limitations but with his own weaknesses, with the equivocations and illusions of his own motives, the more or less sordid chaos of his own impulses. It needs good psychological health to accept oneself thus, not in order to find in this acceptance excuses for all the lack of discipline, but in order to tend to perfection with more light and certainty of effect. It is here that Christian humility is called on to unfold all its blessings, and that the confessor unites on a different plane with the efforts of the psychotherapist, by helping his penitent to see himself humbly as he is, not only in his animality as a man, but also in his condition as a creature and as a sinner. By encouraging him to concentrate not on himself but on God his Creator and Saviour, to apprehend his compass and his end in God, the confessor is doing a work of truth. He is making it easier on the psychological plane for his penitent to accept his troubles, he is even making this acceptance a source of peace, a thing fruitful and dynamic (there is no true humility without generosity), a thing of joy. Humility is not humiliation; it is the exaltation of God, and in him of ourselves;

for it is from him that we receive everything. Humility is at the basis of psychological health as it is of moral and religious health. It is one of the essential points where, in most cases, confessor and psychiatrist can—and must—usefully collaborate.

There is a second point, more nearly essential still. A great many neuroses seem to be caused by a lack of love. All our observation goes to show indeed quite clearly that a child from the moment of his birth needs love as much as air or milk. His appetite for affection is as great as his fragility in the face of the frustrations which he too often meets. From birth to death our need of being loved and of loving is such (it opens indeed on to the infinite) that there is no man worthy of the name who does not feel himself loved and loving as often as he experiences the need and the appeal. Many neuroses have in that their distant origin and their present sting.

Now we know by faith that God is love, that the Father loves us 'as' he loves his Son, who has come among us and died for loved of us. To be a Christian is 'to believe in the love God has for us', to believe that 'God is love' (1 John 4, 16). The point is, then, to believe it, that is to say to take this truth as certain and assured, even though it cannot be rationally demonstrated or palpably perceived. The more this faith is alive in us, the more this love will come to be, if not palpable to the senses, at least lived. The psychological consequences are always beneficial, especially for the sufferer from a neurosis.

It is part of the confessor's duty to encourage his neurotic penitent along this road, particularly when he is crushed by a morbid sense of guilt which makes him see God as a punishing Father or a policeman whose clairvoyance is equalled by his lack of pity. The neurotic who begins to 'believe in the love God has for us', who begins to believe in the mercy of God, and who passes from fear to trust in his relations with him, has taken a big step towards psychological health and Christian perfection.

Charity includes in its essence and in its exercise the love of our neighbour, and progress in this sense cannot fail at the same time to be grounded in and to be made easier by the amelioration of relationships with others which are always in the case of those suffering from a neurosis upset and inhibited.

Charity, which is the purest and strongest of loves, places the Christian in a state where his relations both with God and with his neighbour are sacrificial. Psychological health and Christian



holiness meet harmoniously here to remind us that we are made to love and to be loved. In doing all he can to help his neurotic penitent to grow in a charity which is lived, the spiritual director, in the very act of being faithful to the essential of his priestly vocation, is developing an action certain in its therapeutic effect, an action which cannot fail to converge on that of the psychotherapist.

But in order that this therapeutic action shall be salutary, the priest himself must have a charity which is not only very great but also, and especially, very greatly purified. He cannot, as spiritual director, avoid playing an important part in the life of his penitent, not only on the spiritual plane but also on the plane of the consciously and unconsciously affective. In spite of very great differences in level and approach, when the priest displays his activity, he is, like the psychoanalyst, the object of what the psychoanalysts call a transference. His penitent projects on to him something of his own unconscious emotion and capacity for emotion. The psychoanalyst has to recognize this transference while at the same time remaining emotionally unaffected by the love and hate of which he is the vicarious object on the part of his patient, and that is, moreover, why every analyst has first to be analysed. And it is in this way that he avoids responding to the transference of which he is the object by a counter-transference of the same sort, which would bring him out of his necessary 'neutrality'. In the same way, *mutatis mutandis*, the spiritual director has to balance and purify the sympathy which he gives to a penitent suffering from a neurosis by a deep personal detachment from the penitent's reactions. The diverse modes of affective attachment of which he is habitually the object must not awaken in him any personal attachment, conscious or unconscious, in return. Only a great and true charity allows this harmony between the deepest and liveliest sympathy and the purest inner freedom. It is possible only to the confessor whose charity is living enough for his emotional life itself to be taken up by the love of God, from whom he receives at the same time tenderness and purity. If he loves thus, he will know how to avoid all the snares which his penitent unconsciously sets for him, he will be able to bring him that specific priestly help which he expects, and he will, besides, develop an action certain in its therapeutic effect, which will unite with that of the psychiatrist.

## A CHRISTIAN YOGA

P.-R. RÉGAMEY, O.P.

(Translated from *La Vie Spirituelle*, August-September, 1955)

IN men's inheritance, the most famous of the techniques which set free spiritual energy and lead us beyond the limits where we commonly vegetate is clearly yoga. The word indicates a whole *world* of practices and doctrines in which it is necessary from every point of view to distinguish very diverse tendencies. It may even happen that these tendencies are contradictory. The complete *ensemble* is in fact the heritage of the past five thousand years<sup>1</sup> in an abundant civilization, where some go as far as treating opposites as the same.

We have now good guides to clear our way in this astonishing complexity.<sup>2</sup> They lead us to recognize as an axis in it, classical yoga, as codified by Patanjali in the fourth or fifth century A.D., unshaken in spite of the diverse interpretations of it and in spite of the fact that its very nature as a spiritual technique allows it to be adapted to differing persons and differing groups. Yoga is 'made with innovation'.<sup>3</sup> We as western Christians are asking ourselves, 'Is a Christian yoga possible? Is it desirable? And what can yoga as it exists now teach us?' To answer these questions we must, as it were, take up our position in the axis, at the same time acquainting ourselves with what goes on off the axis.

We are going to try and distinguish first the *aim* of yoga, then the *mentality* which seems to go with it (whether this mentality gives rise to yoga or whether yoga itself tends to produce this mentality), and lastly the *means* which yoga uses.

## I

*The Aim*

The word yoga implies the idea of joining together. The discipline of which it is the name unifies the complex world which the

<sup>1</sup> The ancient civilization of India, discovered recently enough, seems to have known yoga. This civilization stretches as far back as the third millenium B.C., according to Masson-Oursel as far as the fourth (*Le Yoga*, p. 18).

<sup>2</sup> See the bibliographical note which will conclude this article.

<sup>3</sup> Masson-Oursel, in the work mentioned, p. 13.

ascetic presents to himself—ensures ‘the cohesion of his vital forces’.<sup>4</sup> In modern language yoga, if it succeeds, gives access to ‘the highest level in the biological succession’,<sup>5</sup> where the man set free integrates the preceding levels. It would be ‘the total experience of human life’.<sup>6</sup> That is why it tends to produce mastery of the self deep within, the Self, in its complete consciousness. *Setting oneself free* is equivalent to forcing open another plane of existence, to appropriating to oneself a *mode of being* transcending the human condition<sup>7</sup>—the ordinary condition common to men and the inconveniences attendant upon it. ‘The end of classical yoga is perfect *autonomy, ecstasy*’,<sup>8</sup> as opposed to any kind of *ecstasy*. In our time it is indeed necessary to insist on this contrast, when the marvellous is often taken for the spiritual to such a degree that certain drugs are asked to provide spiritual intensity. The exaltation so produced is offered in vain as an inner enchantment; it is in fact a going out of oneself. The superconsciousness which classical yoga aims at, on the other hand, being that of the Self, can be obtained only by the self, in doing away with the empirical selves, not by exciting them, and in a complete and voluntary lucidity. It is *autonomy, ecstasy*—M. Olivier Lacombe uses the word *esseulement* (‘being alone’) to translate the word for the supreme end which Patanjali defines as ‘the constant and motionless resting of spiritual power in its own form’.<sup>9</sup>

It is ‘the experience of the existential depth of the Self’.<sup>10</sup> There is in that a very great human richness. According to Christian vision, the mystery of every spiritual existence is an absolute, since every spiritual nature endowed with intelligence and with freedom is, by that alone, the image of the Transcendent.<sup>11</sup> It is an *absolute*: a reality which can be affirmed in itself, its relations with the transient cut. The experience of this absolute, lived and savoured, is a sort of *natural mysticism* authentic in its own order.

In the course of the last twenty years M. Jacques Maritain, M. Olivier Lacombe and M. Louis Gardet have pointed out in a

<sup>4</sup> Masson-Oursel, in the collection *Yoga* (Cahiers du Sud), p. 6.

<sup>5</sup> Dr Thérèse Brosse, *ibid.*, p. 119.

<sup>6</sup> J. Masuy, *ibid.*, p. ix.

<sup>7</sup> Eliade, p. 18.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 336.

<sup>9</sup> Quoted by Gardet, *Revue Thomiste*, 1954, p. 310, n. 1.

<sup>10</sup> Gardet, *Recherches de l'absolu*, Les Mardis de Dar-el-Salam, Cairo, 1951, p. 64.

<sup>11</sup> Gardet, *Revue Thomiste*, 1954, p. 309.



precise and it seems definitive manner the legitimacy and the risk of such experiences of natural mysticism.<sup>12</sup> Although they go against the spontaneous tendencies of nature one talks, in the connection, of *natural* mysticism in contrast to *supernatural* mysticism, which is the experience of the inmost life of God, Father, Son and Spirit. The serious question posed is whether these experiences are or are not favourable to the union of the soul with the living God, which is, in the end, the only important thing to the Christian.

We must answer that they can be 'either a temptation, or, on the contrary, a help'.<sup>13</sup> And we must certainly add that the risk seems to outweigh the chances of benefit. It is too strong a temptation to set about playing the virtuoso of the most sublime spirituality, too strong a temptation to delight complacently in the experience of one's own plenitude. In what respect then can the success of a training in yoga be a help in the life of friendship with God? In that it is necessary to possess oneself in order to give oneself. This assertion can be contradicted by saying that it is, on the absolute contrary, a question of *losing oneself*, a principle reiterated by our Lord with so much force.<sup>14</sup> That is to argue the gravity of the risk pointed out just now. Whether we consider man or whether we consider the mystery of God, there is no worse failure than this supreme success—a too sure possession of oneself. Real success is the humble ceasing from oneself of love and nothing compromises this more dangerously than recalling oneself to oneself. All this is certainly true. But between this closing upon oneself in possession of oneself and the opening out which love needs and of which love is the principle the contradiction is singularly mysterious. In the end only God knows what takes place. The closing is not inevitable; only it is a fearful risk. When we say that it is necessary to possess oneself in order

12 J. Maritain, *Quatre essais sur l'esprit dans sa condition charnelle*, ch. III, 1939; O. Lacombe 'On Indian Yoga' in *Etudes carmélitaines*, October 1937; 'An Example of Natural Mysticism, India', in *Etudes carmélitaines*, October, 1938; 'Natural Mysticism in India' in *Revue Thomiste*, January, 1951; L. Gardet, 'Some Research on Natural Mysticism' in *Revue Thomiste*, 1948, pp. 76-111; 'Natural Mysticism and Supernatural Mysticism in Islam', in *Recherches de Sciences religieuses*, 1950, pp. 321-365; *Recherches de l'absolu* Les Mardis de Dar-el-Salam, Cairo, 1951; *Expériences mystiques en terres non chrétiennes* 1 vol., Alsatia, 1953; 'True and False Mysticism' in *Revue Thomiste*, 1954, pp. 298-334 (This last article is of capital importance, as are also pages 322-326 of the article in *Rech. de Sc. Rel.*). M. Lacombe and M. Gardet are preparing a book on *The Experience of the Self*.

13 Gardet, *Les Mardis de Dar-el-Salam*, Cairo, 1951, p. 66.

14 Luke 9, 24; 17, 23; John 12, 25.

to give oneself we are thinking of a realization of the conscious being. Disciplines can help this. It is not necessarily egocentric. At all stages of psychical and spiritual development it is a spirit of *ablation* which is essential to man and most likely to lead to his own fulfilment. This spirit can be disinterested. It can be inspired by supernatural love.

Such observations lead us to perceive more clearly where the gravest spiritual risks of yoga lie. From beginning to end the important thing is *orientation*. In awakening the self the intention which may have been, to start with, that of divine love can become entangled in too great a concern for an interior experience more and more abundant and more and more effective. The yogis of India, the sufis of Islam, the adepts of Zen, who call forth their 'abrupt' and peremptory awakening have no other end in their efforts than the brightness of their own fire. That in fact they come upon the living God who hides himself there is possible, and that is God's secret. But the Christian knows in whom he believes and hopes, and whom he loves, *always beyond every experience*.

This certainty of God's transcendence severely limits the claims of experience to be its own norm. The yogis tell us, 'You who remain within the limits of ordinary experience cannot judge the results we reach. Join us in these regions of the interior world where we are advancing and you will see.' There is some truth in this way of talking; it is true that we cannot know what any spiritual fulfilment is in itself unless we have ourselves obtained it. But whatever it may be, we know that our God is infinitely beyond it, and that he gives himself only to humble love.

A reaching beyond ordinary spiritual possibilities with their psychological and bodily props is not necessarily 'diabolical' or 'Promethean'. And I mean a reaching beyond which is accomplished thanks to disciplines set in motion *by man*.<sup>15</sup> We ought to understand once for all Pascal's *mot*, 'man surpasses man'. One of the principal senses in which this is true is that man is not himself unless he ceaselessly passes beyond himself, and in this his opening out to the infinite gives him endless possibilities. The encounter of the western world with yoga seems particularly 'providential' today; 'our civilization calls on us to solve the problem of man and his relations with the universe'; yoga presents itself as exactly

<sup>15</sup> I have discussed this question of principle in my article, 'The Deification of Man', in *La Vie Spirituelle*, November, 1949.

the secular science which has specialized in this research.<sup>16</sup> All our prayers, all our faculties of understanding, all our efforts must surely be awakened by the prospects this opens up. But let us not get excited in a vague way. What exactly are the gains of yoga? At the price of how many losses? Do the few who obtain a high realization of themselves necessarily confine themselves to 'being alone'? Is it of the essence of this last phenomenon that they should become indifferent to the world? Or can their success really be of some benefit to their fellowmen?

*Nowhere, yet, have I found any serious answer to these questions.*

## II

### *The Mentality*

It is now a question of seeing whether the Christian spirit is capable of dissociating the doctrines and practices of yoga from those conceptions and ways of existence, that whole mentality with which in India they are bound up, and which seem incompatible with that spirit. I believe that this dissociation is possible. Curiously enough it seems to me all the easier in that it is a question of freeing yoga from elements which are *more* inconsistent with the Christian spirit. The greatest difficulties in fact do not come from the ideas which are theoretically most important.

This dissociation is all the more necessary because too many people cherish equivocations. They contaminate Christianity by presenting as proceeding from it, for a Christian, Hindu conceptions which the Christian faith cannot allow. For instance a writer tells us that *Karma* is simply 'the theory of the consequence of actions'. This is to slur over the essential point. Christians cannot understand these consequences in the Hindu way, which takes for granted the transmigration of souls. Now in India, if yoga proposes as its end the freeing of man from human and cosmic conditions, it is in order to provide an escape from this supposed fatality of reincarnations. But there is no need to believe in reincarnation to secure better conditions for freedom. Even so, it is necessary to do this with one's eyes open.

In the same way this emancipation from earthly conditions is inspired among the Hindus by their doctrine of cosmic illusion.

<sup>16</sup> Dr Brosse's expressions in *Approches de l'Inde*, volume edited by Cahiers du Sud in 1949, p. 312.



by *Maya*. For some the universe is purely illusory; for others it exists in a real sense, but it exists and continues to exist only because of men's ignorance.<sup>17</sup> This is a capital point but it is easy to purify doctrines and conduct from such attacks on contingent being. The Christian believes in the dogma of creation; he proclaims with his God that this creation is good and very good;<sup>18</sup> he must nevertheless be emancipated from 'the elements of the world'.<sup>19</sup>

The atheism and what one is tempted to call the pantheism of Hindu yoga are still more serious in Christian eyes. Yet they leave the way open for the charity of the Holy Spirit to animate this yoga eventually. In classical yoga there is scarcely any question of God. This is perfectly logical, since yoga is the art of obtaining from oneself all that one can. Patanjali made a rule for the yogi to concentrate on the Lord, *Iṣvara*, and to invoke him in order to hasten deliverance. But this 'God' is not a person; perfectly inactive, he is only an 'archetype of the yogi',<sup>20</sup> projected by him outside himself; he is, as it were, the focus of the yogi, the vanishing point of his perspective, nothing more. And certainly we Christians, for whom God is the life of our life, cannot allow this self-sufficiency of the creature. Yet it is clearly the most honest course that men without revelation can take, to try to exploit their own resources.

For some fifteen hundred years or more a way of 'devotion' has interfered more or less with the way of classical yoga. This is *Bhakti*, and with regard to this we have mixed feelings. On the one hand it is a joy to see a love for God awaken in spiritual 'ways', since this love must surpass them. We have every reason to think that in fact it is normally true charity which assumes the aspect of *Bhakti*, and sometimes in an heroic degree, as, it would seem, in a Ramakrishna. But on the other hand one is very uneasy indeed about its aberrations, about its frequent sentimentality, more than about the *mawkish insipidity* with which M. Masson-Oursel approaches it,<sup>21</sup> and about the vagueness of its object (without revelation it cannot be otherwise); and it is hard to avoid the impression that this devotion combines ill with the disciplines of

<sup>17</sup> Eliade, *Le Yoga*, p. 23.

<sup>18</sup> Gen. 1, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31.

<sup>19</sup> Gal. 4, 3.

<sup>20</sup> Eliade, *Le Yoga*, p. 88. (The author writes *Yogin*, according to the international usage of scholars.)

<sup>21</sup> *Le Yoga*, pp. 44, 70.

yoga, that far from animating them it remains a stranger to them. Will explicit charity succeed any better in that? We would willingly believe so, but there lies one of the essential problems.

As for the so-called pantheism of India, does it always deserve this name? Is the *Self* which yoga sets free a *divine spark*? Certain people can think so, but it is not necessary. It is another thing to conceive as Plotinus did, and as the Upanishads teach, that there is 'a pure and simple identity between the metaphysical centre (of each of us) and the universal centre . . . an identity which needs only to be *experienced and recognized* and which is not to be realized since it is eternally real and actual.'<sup>22</sup> Such philosophic interpretations, with the negation of a personal and transcendent God, can spill over into pantheism, but it is not inevitable. One can quite well refrain from taking 'the experience of the existential depth of the self' for a grasp of God himself. In any case faith would be correct, in that matter, at its very root, a yoga which would be practised by true Christians.

More dangerous perhaps, because touching more nearly our practice, would be the psychological and moral materialism with which yoga is stamped. 'There is no soul; mental functions are biological.'<sup>23</sup> The Samkya-Yoga considers all psychical experience as a simple 'material' process, and its ethics bears the marks of this. Purity, goodness, are not spiritual qualities but a 'purification' of the 'subtle matter' represented by consciousness. . . . The difference between the cosmos and man is a difference only of degree, not of essence.<sup>24</sup> Yoga is supposed to emancipate from *Karma* by scouring off from the soul the traces of its actions. The mentality which appears in such conceptions is naturally that of experimenter, and contributes towards shutting them up inside their own experience. It would be a very bad thing in a Christian. But Christians have the means to preserve themselves from it while at the same time profiting from the realism of yoga. The life of the

22 O. Lacombe and L. Gardet, *Revue Thomiste*, 1954, p. 313, n. 2. It is the well-known identity of *âtman* and *brahman*.

23 To tell the truth such 'materialist' statements demand closer consideration. M. Olivier Lacombe is kind enough to point out to me that in this respect there have existed throughout the centuries two sorts of yoga. One is completely biological, but if the other appears to us 'materialist' it is because it considers as being of the order of 'matter' all that is on this side of pure Spirit. One must no more make a mistake over this conception or this vocabulary therefore than over that of St Paul, when the Apostle talks about 'the flesh'. Yet even in this second variety there is at least a distinct materialist tendency and practically a whole mentality involved.

24 Eliade, *Le Yoga*, p. 37.

spirit is *conditioned*. The codes of behaviour which exploit this conditioning have much to teach us. The conception which those who have successfully focused them outside Christianity have of them matters little from this point of view, so long as Christians do not allow themselves to be won over by this other mentality. But that, after all, is what we have to worry about most. A technique as 'engaging' as this, which transforms the creature to its very depths, which extends its powers, which is to obtain for it possession of the self by the self in the self'<sup>25</sup>—such a technique certainly risks developing the most disastrous of all professional distortions, that of the ascetic who experiments to the furthest point with human possibilities. Every professional distortion consists in gradually making the means into the end. The more spiritual the profession the more obnoxious the distortion, because the spirit is freedom and then it acts as an automatism. The more the means claim of their nature to produce the result, and the more desirable the result is, the greater the risk. I was worried about this from the very beginning of my first article. We are here considering a 'way' at the end of which there is a temptation to say, 'I am in possession of my "divinization" by my own efforts.' At all stages the ascetic takes the risk of reducing his goal to results, and when he can attain these of attributing the whole thing to the guaranteed connection between the means and the results. The true end of spiritual ways is, let us remember, a union of love with the God whose nature it is to give himself freely.

The danger is well-known in the matter of para-psychological 'powers', which yoga normally procures since they are an actualisation of the psychical energy of the soul.<sup>26</sup> Now few yogis, they say, used to advance, in the classical epoch, beyond the stage where one plays with these powers, so much did they delight in exercising them like gods.<sup>27</sup> We are well aware that certain Christian monks in actual fact confuse spiritual perfections with the perfections of regular observance. How much more tempting it is to become absorbed in techniques much more powerful in their psychical if not spiritual rigour and effectiveness.

We should not forget, either, that the yogi runs the risk in his ways of being caught up in his own performance. Apart

L. Gardet, *Les Mardis de Dar-el-Salam*, Cairo, 1951, p. 39.

Gardet, *Revue Thomiste*, 1954, p. 318.

Eliade, *Le Yoga*, pp. 100-101.



from the generality of men, opening his heart to the inner perception of spiritual realities of which others have usually only a gross and erroneous conception or no suspicion at all, he runs the risk of relying on this 'esotericism',<sup>28</sup> of, by comparison, despising faith,<sup>29</sup> of presuming to elevate himself above morality, and seeing in everyday religion only a vulgar degradation of the wonderful knowledge and practice whose secrets he has learnt.

What is one to say to this, except again, and always, that the dangers are very serious and foreboding? If ever Christians practise yoga they will have to live according to a faith, a hope, a divine grace, a humility and love greater than these risks.

From all our considerations we can conclude that we must not identify ourselves unreservedly with either of the two points of view into which opinion on the subject of yoga is commonly divided. Some think that a method is valid for any end. For them it would be of its nature neutral, and would take its quality only from the end to which it is applied and the spirit in which it is used. They quote the saying of Ramakrishna, 'By the light of the same lamp one man may study the Gospel and another execute forgery.' This is too comfortable a doctrine. Careful distinctions are necessary and vigilance with respect to a mentality, a way of existence, to which the means themselves incite. Others, on the other hand, refuse yoga *a priori*, because of the whole context in which it arose, as if it could not be disentangled from that. We are beginning to see that this disentanglement is, in principle, possible, but that it demands an effort at once lucid and generous.

(To be concluded)

28 It is apparent that *esotericism* must not necessarily be conceived as hidden doctrine reserved for initiates, so that access to the realities about which it teaches is forbidden to others. Etymology should help us to correct this conception: *esoterikos* means *inner*. Normally *esotericism* must be intuition (of which everyone is, in principle, capable) of those realities which we usually content ourselves with apprehending in a too material, too practical, too notional way. About that, see Schwaller de Lubicz, *Du symbole et de la symbolique*, Cairo, 1951.

29 So Alain Daniélou, in the collection *Yoga*, p. 130.

## POINT OF VIEW

THE IMITATION OF CHRIST: A NEW TRANSLATION by Edgar Daplyn.  
(Sheed and Ward; 6s.)

MR: May I write to you about this book and the review of it which you published last December? I have no quarrel with the review for anything that is the reviewer's own fault. He was led astray by a book which has no complete imprint and carries a misleading sub-title.

In consequence of these defects, your reviewer treats the translation as veritably 'a new translation' and assumes that it is subsequent to the translations (both published in 1952) 'of Abbot McCann (Burns and Oates) and Leo Shirley-Price (Penguin Classics).' But this it cannot be, for the simple reason that Edgar Daplyn died on August 16th, 1935. It is true that Edgar Daplyn's translation was published posthumously; but even as a printed book it is prior to the two books just mentioned. I possess a copy of it which carries this imprint: 'First published 1949 by Latimer House Limited, 33 Ludgate Hill, London, E.C.4.'

I am not an expert bibliographer and cannot confidently determine what is the relation between the First Edition of 1949 and the volume (seemingly of 1955) which you reviewed. But I should be inclined to call the second book a re-issue or re-impression of the first. For the type is the same, and the two books agree exactly in their 'lay-out', having throughout an identical page-content.

The *Imitation* has been translated into English by a variety of translators, both Catholic and Protestant. But has it ever been translated before by a Unitarian minister? That is what Edgar Daplyn was, and he was a man much esteemed by his co-religionists. I wonder, would he be surprised if he learnt that his translation, in its latest issue, carries an *imprimatur*?

GERARD MOON

## REVIEWS

BROTHER NICHOLAS: A LIFE OF ST NICHOLAS OF FLUE. By George Lamb. (Sheed and Ward; 8s. 6d.)

In *Brother Nicholas* George Lamb has set out to write a short, popular biography of the recently-canonized national saint of Switzerland, which would match the saint's own character in its simplicity, directness and lack of the affectations and pretentiousness which too often seek to pass themselves off as learning. Up to a point he has succeeded: the cackle at the beginning is most admirably cut, and throughout he is commendably anxious to come to the point; but unfortunately he has not been able to avoid the pitfall of this method, because so often having begun *in media res*, he has to go over what he has in anticipation told us when he reaches the appropriate place in his story, producing a tediously repetitive effect. Another danger to which those who write the lives of the great, of this world and of the next, expose themselves is that they cannot help also drawing for us their own characters: and Mr Lamb, in his determination to approach this mysterious figure from the Gothic past as a plain man of the twentieth century with no nonsense about him, sometimes reveals himself capable of trite and trivial observations while he surveys for us the medieval scene. He is much to be applauded in his refusal to make the case of Brother Nicholas more difficult than it need be, or to be fascinated by it for what would be, for the man in the street, the wrong reasons. Nicholas has already gained some celebrity, in the writings of Thurston, for instance, as a classical case of *inedia*: Mr Lamb does not detain us with any unduly long account of the many years in which the saint lived with no bodily sustenance save the Host; nor does he pay any special attention to the even more technical and complex question of how the saint, totally illiterate, overcame this obstacle in learning to achieve an advanced and subtle speculation upon the mysteries of the Faith. But those of us who already know Brother Nicholas, especially if, like Mr Lamb, we have had the good fortune to go to Sachseln in Unterwald to his shrine, and to sit in his hermitage in nearby Raron and listen to the blessed silence of the solitude which Nicholas chose, will find that in this present treatment, along with the scientific problems and the unsolved questions, the awful strangeness to us and to the created world which was the outstanding characteristic of this simple ploughman and soldier turned saint has disappeared too, leaving us with an oddly insipid residue. Many learned studies of Nicholas have already appeared in Switzerland. Mr Lamb seems to be well acquainted with most of them, although one cannot be sure of this, since I



yes no indications of the modern sources of his information, for the benefit of those who can read German and may wish to go to these authorities themselves. Much remains to be done, especially in revealing the literary antecedents of Nicholas's contemplations (and it must be said that Mr Lamb's few general remarks on this topic are shrewd). But meanwhile the Swiss have also produced some outstanding popular books about him: admittedly, they are more expensive books than could perhaps be produced in England; but still some of their methods and their material might with advantage have been used. To make a modern man grasp what Nicholas was and is, nothing could serve better than a sight of one or two of his surviving images and portraits made either in his lifetime or very soon after his death in 1487: the long emaciated form and the terror-struck face which those who saw him so vividly described, are singularly ill portrayed in the bust which serves as frontispiece to this volume. Then, if we are to understand and feel the mysterious world of image-symbols through which Nicholas's untutored mind found a path to the light of the Godhead, we should see a reproduction of one of the strangest relics of medieval piety, the picture which he caused to be painted to help him in his contemplation. The picture is fleetingly described by Mr Lamb, who presumably saw it hanging in the church of Sachseln; but he has not shown its vital connection with Nicholas's story of how he was taught 'the points of the Passion'; and one must beg readers not to imagine that the crude wheel-like diagram depicted on this present book's dust-jacket has any real resemblance to the Sachseln picture. Altogether, this is a disappointing work, doubly so because one is left with the feeling that, given the means, and a conviction that the saints of the Middle Ages are still able to speak to us in their own tongues, the author might have written something which would adequately express the greatness of his subject, and which would have told us truly why, as he so movingly writes at the end, St Nicholas of Flüe is 'one who left wife and family and all that he loved best, so that he could become a father to all men'.

ERIC COLLEDGE

TWO PORTRAITS OF ST TERESA OF LISIEUX. By Etienne Robo (Sands; 9s. 6d.)

A purely naturalistic interpretation of everything in a saint's life that is not obviously supernatural has the great advantage of simplicity and logic. Father Robo has attempted something of the sort with the life of St Teresa of Lisieux and has succeeded admirably. Plane away everything which is due to exaggeration, then everything which is due to uncritical admiration, then everything which may have two interpretations, one marvellous the other ordinary, and you reach

the solid foundation, duly proportioned, safe, irreproachable. That the core of each saint's sanctity. That is what Father Robo has to find in the sources and evidences available.

Inevitably the book appears to be mainly destructive. The faults and imperfections of St Teresa have been glossed over, he brings them into relief. The words she used have been misinterpreted sometimes, even wrongly presented. He gives them their more ordinary meaning. The photographs have been touched up. He gives us the true one. His theme is that the image, both material and intelligible of St Teresa has been tampered with, his purpose is to rub out the false lines.

A very sure and firm knowledge of the essential features of character, and of her sanctity, is a prerequisite for such work. From this point of view Father Robo himself is perhaps open to the charge of subjective interpretation. He has in mind the picture of the *maestri fortis* and is very disinclined to get away from it. It is a safe pattern of course, and is found in every woman saint. But is it enough?

The book is of great value as a piece of history, of hagiography. It dispels a haze of rather childish sentimentality and presents the virtues of St Teresa in the way a critical mature mind likes to see them. It will be a lasting corrective to some less firm, more popular, portraits of the saint. Nevertheless it is not the Little Flower. It is the genus and species, with some individual characteristics. Or, to keep to the author's own metaphor, he has restored a portrait, expertly, but has lost the smile. It is St Teresa, unmistakably, but something has happened to her. It is what she was, but it is not herself. Many readers who have their own ideas of St Teresa will find this portrait most useful for purposes of comparison. Few will say, 'I was quite wrong as Father Robo is quite right.'

GERARD M. CORR, O.S.M.

THE MISSION AND ACHIEVEMENT OF JESUS. By Reginald H. Fuller; 8s. LIFE IN CHRIST. By Theo Preiss; 7s.

CONSCIENCE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. By C. A. Pierce; 8s. 6d. S.C.M. Press.

The Student Christian Movement Press has published several more of its inexpensive and well-produced series of *Studies in Biblical Theology*; these three deal with New Testament subjects. R. H. Fuller's book is the most important. It is a criticism of the radical Form-critic Bultmann and especially of his *Theology of the New Testament*, now available in English. For Bultmann, our Lord's entire mission was to proclaim the God's Reign, a cosmic event that would break in on human society; it was imminent, but there is no evidence that in Jesus it had already

me; his presence and ministry were signs of its approach, and nothing more. It was only after the Resurrection that the Church identified Jesus as the Messiah and bringer of God's salvation. The present book accepts this in part; the writer agrees that what Jesus taught was the imminence of the Kingdom; he will not allow, with Dr Dodd, that our Lord's ministry 'eschatology was realized', that the Reign of God was already present in his own person. It was still in the future; when Jesus should fulfil his vocation, not merely as prophet, but as the Suffering Servant, the Kingdom would be inaugurated by his death on the Cross. From Caesarea Philippi Jesus began to make this clear to his disciples; and, after his death and resurrection, it formed the subject of the Apostles' preaching. They then rightly recognized him as the Christ. Jesus, however, had not come to impose any doctrine of his person, but to evoke from men the response of faith to God's action in him. Here the book has the common failing of modern works of the Liberal school, that of underrating the importance of who Jesus was, and putting the whole emphasis on what he did. Jesus to these writers is God's unique agent for salvation; they will with difficulty allow that his nature was divine.

Theo Preiss was a pastor of the French Reformed Church, recently dead. His *Life in Christ* is a collection of his translated essays, on a variety of New Testament topics. They have depth and brilliance, but are hard to summarise, owing to a certain vagueness, even sentimentality, of thought and expression. The most interesting is the first, entitled Justification in Johannine Thought. It brings out the strong juridical element in the Johannine writings, shown in the frequency of such terms as witness, judgment, accuse, convict, advocate, and so on. In fact, St John is as much concerned as St Paul with the forensic idea of justification; though he does not use the same terminology. In both groups of writings there are strong juridical as well as mystical elements. Christ (and the Spirit) is at once the life of Christians, and their Advocate at the Father's judgment-seat; if John is first of all a mystic, he is a 'juridical mystic'.

C. A. Pierce's book on Conscience in New Testament is a very scholarly, indeed meticulous, study of *Syneidesis* and its cognate terms. The idea of Conscience had no Old Testament history behind it; the word hardly appears in the Septuagint. Though often considered to be borrowed from the Stoics, in fact it was a commonplace of Greek language and popular thought. St Paul first took it into Christianity, apparently from the Corinthians, without changing its connotation. For the New Testament writers, as for the Greek world, conscience is a man's painful reaction, or capacity so to react, against his own infringements of the moral law. What Christianity added was



a relation to the Jewish and Christian doctrine of a righteous and holy God, especially, for Christians, as revealed in Jesus Christ. Conscience is not infallible; it may react wrongly, if the nature of the act is misunderstood. It is to be obeyed; but it is not man's only guide; rather it is a judge of particular past action than a director to what is proposed to be done; in any case it needs to be quickened and informed by faith. The two interact; as faith enlightens conscience so an outrage to conscience may lead to a weakening or loss of faith. The book should be valuable in face of the modern popular religion of Conscience and Common-sense; often no more than sentiment plus uninstructed opinion.

JOHN HIGGENS, O.S.B.

THE CROSS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. H. Wheeler Robinson. S.C.I. Press Ltd. 1955.

'In this sign conquer'—the conquest is one of faith, and this sign is the sign of the Cross. The Cross or Christ crucified is at the very heart of our religion as of our preaching. But that true core of our religion was prepared, and foreshadowed, and foretold over long centuries. It was a profound as well as a long history which reached its term and true fulfilment in the consummation of the Sacrifice of Calvary: *consummatum est*. Professor Wheeler Robinson's three monographs (the earliest, Job, appeared, significantly, in 1916) are now reprinted as one book and present something of the Mystery of the Cross in Job, in the Servant of the second part of Isaiah, and in Jeremiah.

His treatment of Job is as effective a presentation of the structure of the book and its essential problem as any we know. Very happily he links, as we must, the innocent suffering of Job to those words of our Lord: 'neither did this man sin nor his parents; but that the work of God should be made manifest in him'.

The Songs of the Suffering Servant are applied as the New Testament and the Church's tradition apply them. To the individual life and work of our Lord. At the same time 'the conception of the Servant of Yahweh prepares us for the corporate unity of the Church and its head', or, as a Catholic might put it, the doctrine of the Mystical Body has its antecedents in the Old Testament. God chose his people for a purpose; Israel was to become the New Israel of God.

'The Cross in Jeremiah' is perhaps the best in this successful trilogy. We are shown Jeremiah the man, his success through failure, the difficulties of the book as we now have it, the forms of Hebrew poetry, etc. All this and more are made very readable. A great store of biblical lore is 'got across' to the ordinarily or reasonably educated reader. Further we are shown something of the inner conflicts and

uggles of Jeremias. And we like to see the author's scholarship ranging wide (to the Catholic's canon) to include the famous text of the Maccabees:—"This is a lover of his brethren and of the people of Israel; this is he that prayeth much for the people and for all the holy ones, Jeremias the prophet of God" (II Macc. 15, 14).

ROLAND POTTER, O.P.



## NOTICES

READING THE SCRIPTURES with understanding has been made easier for Catholics by a number of publications appearing in recent months. Indeed, whatever stage our appreciation of the Bible may have reached, there is something to help us. For the beginner, who wants a guide in his first approach to the Bible as a whole, *How to Read the Bible*, by Abbé Roger Poelman (Longmans; 6s.) should prove helpful. It will take him on tour through both Old and New Testaments, with short introductions to the books and hints on their relations to one another. A special feature is the judicious selection of passages to be read, bearing in mind that this is very much a beginner's book. But above all it is a book which will lead the reader to the text of Scripture itself, and not serve as a distraction from it. It is translated from the French, apparently in the U.S.A., but there is little in the translation to jar on English ears.

A later stage is catered for by *The Key Concepts of the Old Testament*, by Albert Gelin (Sheed and Ward; 6s.), a book certainly much better produced at the same price. Here again is a translation from the French and one not always felicitous as may be seen in its title. Its purpose is to bring out, by ranging over the whole of the Old Testament, some of the leading themes of God's revelation to his Chosen People. It does not, however, isolate them from the New Testament but indicates briefly their fulfilment in it. This is a book that should help any to meditate the Scriptures.

More detailed and welcome indeed is the first of the Stonyhurst Scripture Manuals, *The Gospel According to St Mark*, by C. C. Martin-le, S.J. (Longman's; 7s. 6d.). Designed primarily as a textbook for use in the upper forms of schools, it has been the fruit of collaboration between Fr Martindale and the teaching staff of Stonyhurst. But the author's insight into and love of the Scriptures have resulted in this book that will bring the Gospel to life for many an adult who would

not care to tackle a full-length commentary. The notes are very and helpful, usually verse by verse, but at times developing into short article on some point of special importance. The Introduction too is good, but an attempt to say too much in one sentence resulted in the amusing slip that the writers of the Synoptic Gospels 'each, very likely, read the other two but none the less pursued his own method of telling his story'!

A short *Life of St Paul*, by Mgr D. J. O'Herlihy (price 1s. 6d.) comes to us from Browne and Nolan, who have published it in association with the Society of St Paul. It is intended to inaugurate a series of Biblical publications to which we look forward with interest. The booklet itself is a reprint of the author's article in the *Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture* and needs therefore no further recommendation.

Finally Messrs Burns Oates are to be congratulated on the excellent production of the new one-volume edition of the Knox Bible (cloth 30s.). It is well printed and bound in a dignified and handy volume making probably the best produced Bible at present available in English, and at a reasonable price. Would that some publisher would do as well for the Douay version. For, despite the assurance that Mgr Knox has 'taken careful account' of all the suggestions for verbal changes which have come from all over the world, this is still the Knox Bible that has divided opinion amongst Catholics for years and will continue to do so. Too often in the Old Testament he has succeeded in his aim of not writing the English of any particular period by simply not writing English at all. Instead we are given what would seem to be an imitation of the kind of language so often used at the end of the last century in translations of the classics; this sort of thing 'A message from the Lord God of hosts; Up, to my house betake thee, and find Sobna, that has charge of the temple. This be the word to him' (Isaias xxii, 15). The language of the Douay version is indeed dated, but it is sober and dignified in marked contrast to the pretentiousness. A further criticism that must be made, and one that is important now that the whole Bible in the Knox version is authorised for public use, is that it does not lend itself to reading aloud. This is not to say that the Knox New Testament may not often be the easiest form of Bible reading yet available to the modern Englishman, but we still need an 'official' translation that is both readable and accurate.



## EXTRACTS

## THE NEW RITES FOR HOLY WEEK

WORSHIP, the American Liturgical Review published by the Benedictines of Collegeville, publishes in its January number an informed and authoritative article on the new Holy Week Liturgy by Fr Josef W. C.S.S.R., Vice-Relator of the Sacred Congregation of Rites. Löw with his inside knowledge of issuing of these revolutionary changes from Rome comments on the three official documents that were promulgated the new legislation. His main theme is the 'pastoral opportunity' these changes offer and the need to prepare the laity in such a way that they should make the most of this opportunity. If the people are to derive the immense benefit for their Christian lives intended by the Holy See they must be instructed in the meaning of these changes. For this reason we should begin at once to prepare for this coming Easter.

The decree (of the Congregation of Rites) calls attention to a twofold movement which was significant from the pastoral standpoint, and which in final analysis occasioned the present new legislation. In the first place, since the early middle ages there occurred a gradual displacement of the liturgical celebration of the sacred triduum from the night (or evening or afternoon) hours to the respective forenoon or morning. . . . In those centuries, however, the three days before Easter were holidays, when people rested from work; they could, accordingly, and were obliged to take part in the church services.

But later these days ceased to be holidays of obligation, with the result that very few people could take part in these morning services.

The regular weekday routine of these days emptied churches nearly everywhere in the morning; and soon there arose substitute popular devotions for the afternoons and evenings.

The Pastoral-liturgical Instruction which followed the Decree emphasizes this point—the return to the liturgy as the centre of popular devotion.

The Ordinary of the place as well as all parish clergy are enjoined to see to it that all such folk customs and devotions which contribute to true piety be preserved and be prudently brought into harmony with the liturgy itself. But then the Instruction adds very clearly: The faithful should be instructed concerning the excellence of the liturgy which always, but most especially in these days (of Holy Week), by its very nature far surpasses all other and even the best of pious devotions and customs.' . . .

All such pious customs (as visits to the 'Sepulchre', the 'Three H Service' etc.) and popular devotions are not abolished. On the contrary, they are certain to be included under that category which it is expressly stated that such practices are 'prudently' to be linked with the liturgy, which latter, however, must always be accorded first place. . . .

The liturgy itself is more sober, even stern, and symbolical, though, especially during these days of Holy Week, it is so eloquently dramatic, it likewise always retains a certain dignified restraint. The ordinary people, however, want something more. They want to experience their religious devotions as much as possible. . . . It would be unjust and pastorally erroneous simply to deprive them of the devotions so dear to them in order to substitute the 'pure' liturgy.

It is comforting to notice from all this that there is nothing liturgical or fanatical behind these changes. As Father Löw says, 'the purpose of liturgical restoration is *entirely pastoral*, inspired by concern for souls; it is not some kind of liturgical archeology; nor is it meant to be a restoration of a museum piece'. The Holy See has a powerful sense of the needs of the faithful and one of the needs has become increasingly apparent in the demand for a liturgy that is really part of the spiritual life of the members of the Mystical Body. Here we find a magnificent expression given to this desire. It is now up to us to prepare fittingly for the great Paschal Feast in the manner indicated by these Roman directives.